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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000188

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2025

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MNUC](#) [TU](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN/TURKEY - DISCUSSION WITH ACTING TURKISH FM

REF: A. SECSTATE 06236

[1](#)B. ANKARA 16

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Ambassador and British Ambassador Westmacott used a meeting on Cyprus with Acting Turkish FM Tuygan January 18 to register US concerns on Iran and urge stronger Turkish support of diplomatic efforts to persuade Iran to abandon its nuclear program and cooperate with the international community. Tuygan heard the pitch, declined to say what further Turkey may say or do, and suggested that he regards a nuclear Iran as a virtual inevitability. Tuygan also said that no visit to Turkey by Iranian President Ahmedi-nejad is in the works. Besides briefing Turkey on the Iranian nuclear program as we have suggested (ref b), post recommends that the Turks also hear from us on what we see as the consequences of a nuclear-armed Iran, including for the Turkish security posture as a member of NATO. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador drew from ref a points on Iran. Elaborating, he noted a statement made on Iran January 16 in which PM Erdogan called on Iran to be more moderate, conciliatory, and transparent in its dialogue with the IAEA and the EU-3. For Turkey, this was not an unhelpful statement and was better than it could have been. But we, Turkey and the many countries concerned about the Iranian nuclear program need stronger support. Ambassador said that the EU-3 effort appears to have failed and that for the diplomatic track with Iran now to have much chance of success, more countries such as Turkey need to recognize and say that Iran,s behavior is radical and dangerous. This is especially so given Turkey,s vulnerability because of its proximity to Iran and to international WMD terrorism. Ambassador observed that action will now turn to the IAEA Board and then to the UNSC. Turkey should add its voice and encourage UNSC members Russia and China and other non-P5 members of the need for an approach that has a chance of persuading the Iranians to reverse course. Ambassador also noted the security and political implications of a nuclear Iran for Turkey, including for Turkey's status as a regional power and the additional military and defense measures that Turkey will be required to take to protect itself and contribute to NATO,s defenses against a nuclear armed Iran.

[1](#)3. (C) UK Ambassador Westmacott echoed these points. He said that a critical next step is for the UNSC be united. If it could be united in taking real action, that would surprise the Iranians and might help bring them back to the table and away from confrontation.

[1](#)4. (C) Tuygan said that Turkey supports US and EU diplomacy on Iran, but declined to indicate what Turkey might further do or say on the issue. He opined that Iran seems bent on developing nuclear weapons, will not likely give up those efforts, and probably cannot be stopped from acquiring nuclear weapons in several years' time. He said that Turkey has &other priorities8 in the region, pointing to Cyprus (which was the main subject of the meeting). Nevertheless, he took note of the argument that a nuclear-armed Iran would have extremely important security consequences for Turkey, the US and NATO, and that Turkey,s approach needs to reflect that reality more strongly than has been the case.

[1](#)5. (C) During a brief one-on-one at the conclusion of the meeting, Ambassador raised press reports here about a possible visit to Turkey by Iranian President Ahmedi-nejad. He noted that other senior Turkish officials had debunked these reports, but that we understood a Turkish embassy officer had recently told Department officials such a visit may indeed be in the works. Such a visit, especially at this time, would be a big mistake. Tuygan stated categorically that a visit by the Iranian president is not on. He said the Iranians had inquired about the possibility some time ago and were told that such a visit would &require a lot of preparation.8 Tuygan made clear that no visit will happen anytime soon and especially not in the current climate.

[1](#)6. (C) Comment: The visit January 17 of EUCOM General Charles Wald, which focused heavily on Iran, was helpful at least with his military interlocutors. Wald told press here that a nuclear-armed Iran would necessitate a number of defensive measures by us and others, including on missile defense, which may lead to more realistic thinking by the Turks on the implications of a nuclear Iran. Post requested in ref b a delegation to describe in more detail what we know

about the Iranian nuclear program, and we understand that this may now be in the works. Turkey should also hear from that group and perhaps in NATO councils what we expect will be the consequences of a nuclear-armed Iran ) arguments that may strengthen the hand here of those who want to see Turkey take a stiffer line with Tehran.

WILSON